

## July 2016 Column

I always try to write something with easy-going random thoughts about the city this time of year. You know, something to match the hazy, lazy days of summer. I had this column already done, ready to send it in, then it seems like the world caught fire. It shook me into the reality that being mayor is more than economic development, festivals, parks, utilities, streets, and drainage. I was brought back to the reality that the primary job of any public official is to ensure the safety and security of the people they serve.

The murders of the police in Dallas sent us all into mourning. Next, the terrorist attacks in Nice, France took over the world's attention with the carnage of innocent citizens. Then the horrible murder of policemen in Baton Rouge gave us another gut-punch. All of this took place in the space of a few days. It seems we can scarcely absorb the grief of one incident, before another comes along to overwhelm us. Please pray for the victims and their families, and pray that our leaders will have the courage to confront the evil that threatens us all.

As a person in a position of authority, all these events have been weighing heavily on my mind. It's disturbing because even though these incidences did not occur here, they have a direct influence on the morale and attitude of our police officers. Can you imagine how difficult it is to perform your job when your profession is ridiculed and demeaned by the very people you are sworn to protect? Can you imagine how difficult it is to perform your job when national leaders give tacit approval to the actions of groups that revile you?

Can anything like Dallas or Baton Rouge happen here? I suppose anything is possible, but I feel good about our community, and the police force that protects us.

Our police force is extraordinary. I am not surprised that we were named one of the safest cities in the area in a recent survey. Our police chief, Kevin Kelso, has assembled a highly professional group of officers and personnel, and has emphasized integrity and character in his staff. His policy of community policing has been effective throughout the city. In light of what is happening around the world, we need to all be thankful that these men and women are out there protecting us every day. Whenever you have a chance, shake a cop's hand and tell him or her thanks for keeping us safe.

Small towns like Seguin are the best places in the world to live. Just look at the news every night, and count your blessings. Just think - most of the big cities have horrible traffic, overpriced housing, increased crime, and more intense racial strife and division.

Yes, we will grow, but we will do it by keeping our values and traditions alive. We have the luxury of seeing what works and what doesn't work in various parts of the country as communities grow. Since we are still a good distance from San Antonio and Austin, we control our own destiny. Unlike the many attached big city suburbs, we won't be swallowed up and be confronted with all their big city problems anytime in the near future.

As our city grows, we have to be mindful to make sure that we do not divide ourselves like so many have done in the big cities around the nation. This unity can only exist in a place of peace and understanding. And that peace and understanding can only exist in a community that respects the rule of law, and a community that respects the brave police force sworn to uphold that rule of law. After all, that's why they are called "Peace Officers".

God bless our Seguin Police Department, our Guadalupe County Sheriff's Department, and all other law enforcement officers out there protecting us every day!

Gosh, I love this town!